

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE **5-A**

WASHINGTON TIMES
22 July 1985

Accused Ghanaian spy says he was trying to recover data

By Ed Rogers
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

A Ghanaian accused of espionage is being held without bond in spite of his lawyer's argument that he only sought to get back information the CIA had stolen from his country.

Attorney Thomas Dyson gave that account of Michael Agbotui Soussoudis' alleged spying activity during a bond hearing Friday in Alexandria before U.S. Magistrate W. Harris Grimsley.

Mr. Soussoudis, 39, is charged with conspiring for a year and a half with Sharon M. Scranage, 29, of King George, Va., to pass classified information to his West African government while she was a CIA clerk in Ghana.

Ms. Scranage, questioned after she was reassigned to CIA headquarters last May, told the FBI she gave Mr. Soussoudis the identities of undercover CIA agents and their "assets," a term meaning their intelligence sources in Ghana.

"He got no U.S. military information, only information the CIA had gotten from Ghanaian nationals," Mr. Dyson argued. "So, in effect, those people were traitors to the Ghanaian nation.

"All he wanted was the names of assets who were seriously betraying their government. He tried to determine what the assets told the CIA about arms in Ghana. He never asked for military information that had to do with the United States."

Witnesses to this plea that Mr. Soussoudis be freed on bond included Eric Otoo, Ghana's ambassador to the United States, and five aides who sat in the front row of spectators' seats in the small hearing room.

"The ambassador of Ghana is in the court room as a spectator and he has authorized me to say Mr. Soussoudis could live in the District of Columbia at the embassy residence and he would undertake the duty of seeing that he attends all hearings and not leave the D.C. area," Mr. Dyson said.

The attorney added that Mr. Soussoudis would post a substantial

bond and pointed out that he has no passport.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Justin Williams opposed freeing Mr.

Soussoudis on bond, arguing that he "clearly worked for the Ghanaian intelligence service" and "goes back and forth easily between the United States and Ghana."

In passing the names of CIA informants to the government of Ghana, Mr. Williams said, the defendant "not only endangered the lives of these people, but was injuring the interests of the United States."

Referring to Ms. Scranage's statements to the FBI that Mr. Soussoudis slept with a 9mm automatic pistol under his pillow in Ghana and made her feel "threatened," Mr. Williams argued that Mr. Soussoudis is "potentially violent."

If freed on bond, Mr. Williams said, the defendant would be "an

extreme danger to witnesses and to the community."

Magistrate Grimsley agreed with Mr. Williams to the extent of denying a bond, although he said he was inclined to agree with the defense argument that Mr. Soussoudis was trying to serve his own country as best he could.

But Mr. Grimsley pointed out that the evidence indicated that Mr. Soussoudis had also "compromised CIA intelligence."

Mr. Grimsley had approved a \$25,000 bond for Ms. Scranage after her parents turned over a deed to the family home in King George, which was said to have a \$100,000 market value, to insure payment if she tries to flee.

One purpose of the hearing was to

determine whether there was sufficient evidence to prosecute Mr. Soussoudis on the espionage conspiracy charge and this called for lengthy testimony from FBI Agent Eugene J. Noltkamper.

The agent's testimony revealed that the CIA had warned Ms. Scranage to end her relationship with Mr. Soussoudis while she was in Ghana, but she continued to pass classified information to him from CIA files.

Ms. Scranage told the FBI that shortly before her transfer from Ghana she met with Mr. Soussoudis and officials of his government who insisted that she get information about 13 traveling Ghanaian "dissidents" from CIA files in Washington.